

SUZUKI PIANO BASICS FOUNDATION NEWS

Volume 7.2, March/April 2002

To facilitate, promote, and educate the public on the way of teaching and playing the piano taught at the Talent Education Research Institute in Matsumoto, Japan by Dr. Haruko Kataoka.

Suzuki Piano Basics Foundation News

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Shall We Change Our Way of Thinking?

By Dr. Haruko Kataoka

We live in an age overflowing with information. When we see famous actors on television advertising certain consumer goods, we tend to buy their products. After seeing the same commercials over and over again, we are so easily persuaded. Before you know it, we are all thinking the same way about many things. We become brainwashed. I am not only referring to the effects of the media. We are continuously exposed to force-fed information and various fads to the point where it is difficult to have a belief or an opinion of our own.

For example, we can look at the way we deal with the common cold. There is a big difference between the way we handle it now and seventy years ago. These days, whenever a person has a high fever, he or she usually goes to a

doctor immediately. Our health insurance system makes it convenient for us to receive an injection or a prescription drug. Possibly, this treatment will make the patient feel better. In the old days people did other things such as keeping the body warm, wrapping the neck with cotton, drinking lots of liquids, etc. Just recently, modern medicine has discovered that it is not good to reduce a high fever too soon because the fever can kill the cold virus. This simple fact changed my way of thinking. Even in the case of a stomach ache or indigestion, we can optimistically trust that our body is giving us a natural signal, saying "I cannot digest any more food," or "Please do not eat bad things."

Thanks to Mr. Noguchi, founder of *Seitai Kyokai*, who has researched the human body extensively, I have been practicing the idea that it is a good thing to catch a cold and that it is better for the future of one's body if we let the body heal itself rather than to rely on using medicine.

When you look at something from a different angle rather than reacting always in the same way, you can have an interesting result. In the case of education, this is also very true. It is far better to educate and nurture children's abilities of concentration, patience, effort, posture (health), dreams, and love than screaming in their face, "Study hard!" just because you are worried about their test scores.

I know a certain set of parents who are very rare nowadays in Japan. They are in my piano class, and I think they are wonderful. They believe that it is alright to be absent from school if you are doing something else with total commitment. And they practice what they believe. One example of this is their son's involvement with computer games. As a junior high school student, he holds the record of playing a computer game for 48 hours straight without any breaks. Asked how he did this, he said that he did not go to school, did not sleep for two days, and ate only when he thought about it. The interesting thing, he said, was that his posture while playing the game was the same posture he uses while practicing piano! I am sure that he will become a great researcher, or just a great person, who can accomplish a big task in 10-20 years (that is, if he does not get lazy).

I am afraid that if we adults are bound by the idea that it is a bad thing to be absent from school in order to play computer games, we will create boring children who grow up only being able to follow manuals. Parents need a strong belief about the important fundamentals of becoming a human being, and then to teach these to their children without being influenced by popular conventional wisdom.

Shall we look around and change our way of thinking? I am certain this can lead to a happier life.

Translated by Ken Matsuda
Edited by Dr. Karen Hagberg
Hard Copy Cartoons Illustrated by Juli Kataoka
From **Matsumoto Piano Newsletter**
Volume 11, Number 1

Announcing a New Recording

By pianist Seizo Azuma, with cellist Mineo Hayashi entitled
Fun Classics: 12 Pieces for Cello and Piano

Includes pieces from the romantic repertoire, from Chopin to Ernest Bloch, Felix Mendelssohn to Pablo Casals. Good for instilling an appreciation for beautiful melody!

Available to Suzuki Piano Basics Foundation members
for the introductory price of \$17 (free postage).

Order from Linda Nakagawa
242 river Acres Road
Sacramento, CA, USA 95831
Make checks out to Susuki Piano Basics Foundation.

Listening for the 2002 10-Piano Concert Repertoire

By Leah Brammer, Atlanta, Georgia

The 10 Piano Concert this April will feature the famous Sonata for *Two Pianos in D Major*, K448 by Mozart. Fortunately, there is a wonderful disc currently available with pianists Murray Perahia and Radu Lupu.

There is a great quote from the liner notes of this disc which sums up the piece very well:

"The art with which the two parts are made completely equal, the play of the dialogue, the delicacy and refinement of the figuration, the feeling for sonority in the combination and exploitation of the different registers of the two instruments-all these things exhibit such mastery that this apparently 'superficial' and entertaining work is at the same time one of the most profound and most mature of all Mozart's compositions." Brandon Seil, student of his mother Vicki Seil from Arizona will be one of the pianists performing this work at the Ten Piano Concert in Matsumoto. I asked him how he felt about the Sonata. In his words:

"I think this piece is exciting! Sometimes the two pianos are playing the same thing an octave apart, while other times a phrase stating a question is played by one piano, then the second piano and then answered by both pianos at the same time! I'm really looking forward to the rehearsals where all ten of us will work together." It is wonderful to hear two great pianists performing on this disc at the same time. Imagine how this piece will sound on ten pianos!

Another piece which will be performed on the 10-Piano Concert is the *Waltz in A-flat*, Op. 42 by Chopin. Dr. Kataoka is asking the students to listen to the recording of pianist Dinu Lipatti. This recording of the waltz is available on the *"Great Recordings of the Century-EMI Classics"* recording of the *14 Waltzes* by Chopin.

This recording is not only a classic, it is legendary. It was recorded in 1950, the last year of Dinu Lipatti's life, in *"vintage mono sound."* Every reviewer speaks in superlatives about it, including the reviewer on the Tower Records website who says:

"One could continue to throw adjectives at Lipatti's playing without ever capturing the feeling of 'rightness' that permeates it. His audiences were moved by something they felt as spiritual." This recording is a good basic for every home collection. It's pure simplicity and refinement make it good for young students. It's romantic period style appeals to teen-agers. Adults will enjoy the sense of calm and peace when they have it on in the house.

Many Recordings Currently Unavailable in
Suzuki Piano Basics Mail Order Service

We are currently very low on materials and
have not been able to fill some orders.

Dr. Kataoka's 2002 Workshop Schedule

June 3-7, Louisville, KY

Registration Deadline: 1 March 2002

Bruce Boiney, Director
Malinda Rawls, Assistant Director
173 Sears Ave. Suite 273
Louisville, KY 40207
Phone/Fax: (502) 896-0416
Email: director@suzukipiano.org
Web Site: www.suzukipiano.org

Make your plans now to attend this year's institute in Louisville. Please note one significant change: our registration deadline is March 1st, a month earlier than last year. Look for our institute brochure in your mailbox soon and mail your form (and your students' forms)--registration fills quickly.

In addition to welcoming back Dr. Kataoka, we are excited to announce the following piano faculty this year: Bruce Anderson, Lori Armstrong, Leah Brammer, Gloria Elliot, Huub de Leeuw, Karen Hagberg, Cathy Hargrave, and Linda Nakagawa.

In addition to masterclasses, students will also receive several hours of enrichment classes and perform in an evening recital. An exciting aspect of the Louisville Institute is that teachers not only get to attend the full workshop with Dr. Kataoka, but are also able to observe the other piano faculty teach student lessons throughout the week. This year's schedule will make this easier than ever to do.

Please visit our web site for more information and be on the lookout for that brochure. We hope to see you in Louisville!

Thanks, Bruce

June 12-16, Orange County, CA

Mei Ihara, Director
321 N. Deepspring Rd.
Orange, CA 92669
Phone: (714) 997-8692
Email: Iharam@earthlink.net

Dear Teachers, This is the second year that Orange County teachers will host a Piano Basics Teacher's Workshop with Dr. Kataoka. Our first Teacher workshop in 2001 was a very successful one and we are working hard and planning to make the 2002 workshop even better.

Please come and join us for training and studying with our master teacher Dr. Kataoka, the co-founder of the Suzuki Piano School. The workshop will be at Concordia University (Irvine, California), a small and cozy campus with a quiet environment. At Concordia, you can remove yourself from a busy schedule, focus your ears and mind on studying and at the same time enjoy the wonderful Southern California weather. The dormitories are reasonably priced and the food is good. Beautiful beaches are conveniently located close to the workshop site. Come early or stay afterwards to take advantage of such incredible vacation sites as Disneyland, Knott's Berry Farm, Hollywood and Universal Studios. You will want to schedule extra days in sunny, southern California!

Please come and join us, meet other teachers, share your experiences and friendship. Make your plans now.

Mei Ihara, Director

Kataoka Workshop 2002

Atlanta, Georgia, USA

August 2-7 at Spivey Hall

Please plan to attend this 5-day Suzuki Piano Basics Workshop with Dr. Haruko Kataoka amidst the beautiful surroundings of the Clayton State College campus.

The basic daily schedule consists of:

Masterclass lessons for teachers and students
Observation of student lessons
Lectures by Dr. Kataoka

Special activities and events will include:

Friendship Concert and Gala Reception
Teacher Welcome Dinner
Lunch picnic by the lake
Visiting students and teachers from Japan
Special lunch and learn opportunities

Robin Blankenship and Laretta Russell, Directors
2518 Country Lake Circle
Powder Springs, GA 30127

Robin Blankenship
Phone/Fax: (770) 943-1218
Email: Rblan545@aol.com

Laretta Russell
Phone: 770-992-2140
Email: lrussell@usa.com

Brochure and applications are online at: <http://www.atlantasuzukipiano.org>

Sacramento Suzuki Piano Basics Workshop

With Dr. Haruko Kataoka

Sacramento Convention Center, Room 202
August 10-14, 2002

Registration Deadline: June 15, 2002

Linda Nakagawa, Director
242 River Acres Drive
Sacramento, CA 95831
Phone/Fax: (916) 422-2952
Email: g.nakagawa@attbil.com

After you have attended the other workshops with Dr. Haruko Kataoka make plans to end your summer studies in Sacramento. After one week of participating in a workshop with Dr. Kataoka, many teachers have said: "My teaching really improved after studying with Dr. Kataoka, but I found myself slipping back into old teaching habits." This is the reason we need to observe Dr. Kataoka as much as possible. Our teaching will only get better the more we observe Dr. Kataoka.

Japanese teachers who study directly with Dr. Kataoka in Matsumoto have accompanied her to Sacramento and other places. We sincerely hope they will come again so we all can observe them teach too. In the past, students of these teachers from Matsumoto have come to participate in a Friendship Concert along with our American students. We hope to have a high quality recital for you to enjoy.

I look forward to meeting all of you. Please come! Let's become friends. Let's study and work hard to become better teachers and better human beings. If we want our students to improve, we must become better ourselves!

Thanks and see you soon!

Linda Nakagawa

Reconciliation of Editions of the Suzuki Piano School

Part Seven: *Melody* by Robert Schumann

By Cathy Williams Hargrave, Richardson, Texas

The primary differences between the Japanese edition published by Zen-On and the American edition published by Warner Brothers for Robert Schumann's *Melody* are related to fingerings. The slurs and dynamics are the same in each edition, and the Warner Brothers edition has the added bonus of clearly indicating with parentheses which markings were not originally Schumann's.

Reconciliation of Right Hand Fingering

Measure 3, 4th Beat:

Warner Bros has Finger 1 on *Do*

Zen-On has Finger 2

Dr. Kataoka teaches Finger 2

Measure 4, 1st Beat:

Warner Bros. has Finger 4 on *Ti*

Zen-On has Finger 1

Dr. Kataoka teaches Finger 1

Reconciliation of Left Hand Fingering

Measure 3, 4th Beat:

Warner Bros. has Finger 3 on *Mi*

Zen-On has Finger 2

Dr. Kataoka teaches Finger 2

Measure 4, 1st Beat:

Warner Bros has Finger 4 on *Re*

Zen-On has Finger 3

Dr. Kataoka teaches Finger 3

Measure 4, 2nd Beat:

Warner Bros. has Finger 5 on *Do*

Zen-On has Finger 4

Dr. Kataoka teaches Finger 4

Measure 6, 1st Beat:

Warner Bros has Finger 4 on *Re*

Zen-On has Finger 3

Dr. Kataoka teaches Finger 3

Measure 6, 2nd Beat:

Warner Bros has Finger 5 on *Do*

Zen-On has Finger 4

Dr. Kataoka teaches Finger 4

Measure 8, 2nd Beat:

Warner Bros has Finger 5 on *Do* and Finger 4 on *Do#* (see note below)

Zen-On has Finger 4 on *Do* and Finger 3 on *Do#*

Dr. Kataoka teaches the Zen-On fingering

Measure 8, 3rd Beat:

Warner Bros has Finger 3 on *Re*

Zen-On has Finger 2

Dr. Kataoka teaches Finger 2

Measure 11, 1st Beat:

Warner Bros. has Finger 3 on *Fa*

Zen-On has Finger 2

Dr. Kataoka teaches Finger 2

Measure 11, 2nd Beat:

Warner Bros. has Finger 5 on *Mi*

Zen-On has Finger 3

Dr. Kataoka teaches Finger 3

Measure 11, 3rd Beat:

Warner Bros has Finger 5 on *Re*

Zen-On has Finger 4

Dr. Kataoka teaches Finger 4

Note: This series of articles uses the *Sol-Fa* system with a Fixed Do for naming notes. This means that in any key signature, "C" is always Do. *Sol-Fa* and *Solfège* are not the same systems; although, they are similar. Unlike *Solfège*, the addition of accidentals in the *Sol-Fa* system does not change the note's name. For example, when singing a note with an accidental, the pitch will change but the word "sharp" or "flat" would not be sung. However, when verbally discussing the names of notes, the word "sharp" or "flat" is used. Americans do not learn this system but many other countries do. It is very simple and children do not become confused.

This concludes Part Seven.

A FOUR-PIANO EVENT

By Kathy Moser
Jeffersonville, Pennsylvania

On November 18, eighty-nine students from the Greater Philadelphia Suzuki Association participated in our second 4-Piano Concert. We began weekend rehearsals at the piano store one month in advance.

At each rehearsal, various signs were posted to help observers understand what we were trying to accomplish. Our first weekend's flyer explained some basic reasons for doing such a project:

These students will experience a great deal more than what it is to be able to accompany another musician...students feel most motivated to learn when they are around others who are striving to improve their playing. Each child can feel a sense of personal satisfaction for playing well and also experience the camaraderie of working with a team for a successful joint effort... the quality of playing achieved at these rehearsals can be expected to be much higher than levels achieved in most any other setting. These students must play with absolute accuracy...

Excerpts from the program notes also gave us the opportunity to educate the public about Dr. Suzuki's ideas:

It was Dr. Suzuki's belief that great music, and great art in general, should be accessible not only to some in our society, but to virtually everyone. He believed that if we adults gave our children adequate exposure and opportunity to get to know about these great works of art, that they would not only learn from them, but that they would absorb them and would be able to have them for their own. We believe that this is important work that we are doing because it

is helping the next generation to become more sensitive and more caring and, in the long run, to become a more peaceful generation..... Dr. Suzuki's...spirit remains alive and well today in the thousands and thousands of teachers, parents, and students worldwide who continue to practice and promote his philosophy. It is in this spirit that we present our program today.

Parents reported that their children had never practiced so much. The students' desire to do so much extra daily practice was truly the most rewarding outcome of the whole process for me! I am happy to report that the motivation has continued for weeks after the concert. One teenager who usually struggles to get in 40 minutes of practice on any given day came to her last lesson and said, *"I practiced 2 hours today!"*

After the concert, I asked for reactions from parents and students. Here are just a few:

All the students' pieces were really polished-this was not your typical piano recital!

My three favorite things: cool piece, cool coach, cool kids in my group. (Isn't that cool?!)

There is something about observing others working on a single piece for 45 minutes that gives you a whole new definition for 'practicing' or 'polishing' a piece.

The 40 minute rehearsals seemed so short!

The 80 minutes of rehearsing was so long (from girl who performed 2 pieces!)

I had no idea that so many boys played the piano!

Now when we hear these pieces at home, it's so wonderful. They touch us in a whole different way-the feeling is just beautiful.

It was amazing that, on 4 pianos, even complicated pieces like the Daquin Cuckoo and Brahms Waltzes could sound like one piano.

Traditional teachers in attendance were impressed and extremely complimentary. And my reaction? As several parents noted, the teachers worked so hard. The first few weeks of rehearsals were incredibly stimulating. My fellow coaches, Dawn Flewellen, Jane Guerin, Joan Krzywicki, and Carole Mayers, each had their own teaching style and much to offer. The teachers would watch each other coach and give and get feedback about teaching strategies-I learned so much from this sharing. But by the final week, I was losing energy. Then on concert day the whole experience was so wonderful and so exciting; all weariness dissolved! This taught me yet another important lesson. I was able to imagine what students go through if they do not have the supportive, social environment that Dr. Suzuki always stressed. After so much work and preparation, everyone needs the natural pay-off: to perform well for others and be recognized for all their effort. I suddenly felt sorry for those students who miss group lessons or recitals and work hard without enough reward that can encourage and motivate them. I talk frequently to parents about this, but it had never hit home the way it did with this concert experience. I have learned to encourage families more than ever to make the most of these rewarding opportunities.

As you might imagine, I am already thinking about the next 4-Piano event (which won't be until 2003!). Just as I said about my participating students, the motivation continues...

(Web Editor's Note: a photo of Joan Krzywicki, Dawn Flewellen, Carole Mayers, Jane Guerin, and Kathy Moser accompanies the hard copy)

Experience A Beast In Action

**By Rita Burns
Carmichael, California**

If you regularly receive this newsletter you must have read Dr. Haruko Kataoka's article in the January/February issue entitled *"Be A Beast"*. If you haven't read it, I recommend that you do. The main point of the article was that it is important for us humans to focus and to be intense in order to achieve excellence, and doing this repeatedly will strengthen our minds. We all want our students to become accomplished pianists, but we also want them to become loving human beings who can cope with a world that is sometimes difficult. Do you agree with me that it is generally the tough times in life, when we are challenged, that give us the opportunity to learn and grow? If so, what better place for a child to experience a challenge than piano practice.

A "scary" environment can provide mental excitement on a daily basis and produce excellent piano students. My father was very strict and provided many scary times for me when I was a child. He was persistent about reminding me to practice the piano, do my homework, complete jobs around the house, etc. At the time, I thought he was a nag. He never became tired of setting standards and reminding me to work hard to do my best. I never doubted that he loved me, but I was afraid of him. He was not mean, nor rarely spoke with a loud voice. But I knew that he was serious when he gave me instructions. He kept his promises and was consistent with punishment. So I practiced and learned to love playing the piano. I thought of him as a lion who was always watching and paying attention to what I was doing. He was relentless. He never gave in or gave up. I thank my father now for the love that he gave me as a child.

I have tried to be aware of "*being a beast*" when teaching. First of all, it takes a lot of energy and concentration. I am aware when I am focused (a beast) and also when I get lazy and am not creating a good learning environment for the student. It really does not feel good as a teacher to be teaching this way, kind of spinning your wheels and not going anywhere. Something happens in my piano studio when I am focused, really in tune with the student, and have a specific goal. Everyone perks up.

Please don't misunderstand, I am not talking about getting angry with your students or their parents. Although we all get frustrated at times when teaching, that is always a problem, so consider yourself useless when that happens. I think Dr. Kataoka is talking about being aware of the atmosphere that you are creating and the effect it has on your student and parent. She is talking about being relentless and creating a "scary" atmosphere where the student knows he should pay attention. You can do this with your voice and your body. If you are unfocused and lax as a teacher the student will directly experience the negative results.

All of my students need reminding about posture, listening, etc., always the same things. Sometimes I think, this person will never sit straight, I may as well give up. I won't remind him today. I think that is the attitude which is not being a beast. We have to care for the students enough to never tire of reminding them about posture, sound, and practice. In other words, we have to become real nags. That is what my Dad was. He never let up. And even though I was afraid of him, I was stubborn enough to still try to resist him. I was always finding ways to resist practice or instruction of any kind. I was not a person who tried to please. He still did not let up.

When I first went to a piano workshop with Dr. Kataoka I immediately recognized a person like my Dad. None of my previous piano teachers were beasts. I was fascinated to see a teacher who cared enough about each and every student and worked harder than any piano teacher I had ever experienced. Those of you who regularly go to workshops know what I am talking about.

The difference between reading Dr. Kataoka's article about being a beast and attending a workshop where you can see her teach is maybe a little like hearing a CD rather than a live concert. There is nothing like being in the room when a great teacher is working with a student. I have come to believe that there are only a few great teachers, as there are only a few great performers. So, when Dr. Kataoka is willing to come and give one hundred percent of herself in a workshop, please take advantage of the opportunity. It doesn't matter where or when, just go. The applications are starting to come in the mail. If you are a member of Piano Basics, you will receive four applications for workshops; two in June, and two in August.

The only way that you can really start to learn how to become a better teacher and be a beast yourself is to experience live and in the room the sight, sound, and feel of what is going on between teacher and student. Dr. Kataoka is a very loving "beast" with the students. Please go watch her live. You owe it to yourself, and you especially owe it to your students.

Access <http://core.ecu.edu/hist/wilburnk/SuzukiPianoBasics/Discography.htm>
for the most recent edition of Suzuki Piano Basics Foundation Discography:
Recommended Recordings, Books, and Videos of the Suzuki Piano Repertoire.

Suzuki Piano Basics Foundation Website address: <http://core.ecu.edu/hist/wilburnk/suzukipianobasics/>

Please send corrections to [Kenneth Wilburn](#), Web Editor

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